



**East Acton Village
Planning Committee**

CONSENT 3/22/04

3/22 14

TOWN OF ACTON

472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts 01720
Telephone (978) 264-9636
Fax (978) 264-9630
E-Mail: EAV@acton-ma.gov

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: BOS Don P. Johnson, Town Manager **Date:** March 17, 2004
From: East Acton Village Planning Committee
Subject: Letter to Doug Foy requesting support of EAV Plan

Please find attached a draft letter to Doug Foy, Chief of the Office of Commonwealth Development, requesting his support of the East Acton Village Plan. The EAVPC would like you to join us in soliciting Chief Foy's support of the plan, as he is in charge of MassHighway, and they own and control Great Road – a critical component of the plan's implementation. Chief Foy is a long-time champion of Smart Growth and walkable communities.

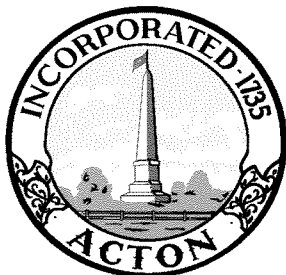
Here is some background information:

- In a letter dated August 23, 2002, Thomas J. Waruzila, District Highway Director, MassHighway, wrote Senator Pam Resor, "we are in the process of re-evaluating the appropriate speed limits along Route 2A/119 in Acton. If any changes are necessary as a result of our study, they will be implemented accordingly."
- In a letter dated September 3, 2002, Mr. Waruzila wrote George Wrenn regarding speed limits on Great Road: "...the District would be more than happy to revisit this matter once the East Action [sic] Village revitalization project has been completed."
- On the WalkBoston website, the Annual Meeting Highlights give some quotable quotes from Chief Foy, who was their keynote speaker:
 - "I want there to be a pedestrian army in this state"
 - "(I am working to) "force integrated thinking" throughout planning in the departments of Transportation, Housing, Environment and Energy ..."
 - Chief Foy assured WalkBoston they had a "receptive ear" at the State House, and asked the organization to help with three things:
 1. Creating the Pedestrian Army: "Keep growing, keep raising awareness" about the importance of walkable communities and safe pedestrian environments.
 2. Focusing on effecting change in our own cities and towns, emphasizing, "We need you to empower local communities to reach out to the state for assistance and support" on projects that promote sustainable development.

3. Voicing support to members of the state legislature, whose approval is required for some of the administration's new development initiatives.
- "Foy said his mantra for development in Massachusetts is simple: 'Every child should be able to walk to a library'"

(excerpts from WalkBoston Annual Meeting Highlights accessed at www.walkboston.org/highlight.htm on 1/10/04)

The EAVPC believes that Chief Foy, if asked, would lend his support to implementing our vision for East Acton Village. Please review this letter and send us your comments; if you support the sending of this letter, we will return a final draft for your signature.



TOWN OF ACTON
472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts, 01720
Telephone (978) 264-9636
Fax (978) 264-9630
www.acton-ma.gov
bos@acton-ma.gov

Board of Selectmen

March 17, 2004

Douglas Foy
Chief of Commonwealth Development
State House
Boston, MA

Dear Chief Foy,

As the former head of the Conservation Law Foundation, and currently as the Chief of Commonwealth Development, you have long championed Smart Growth. Last March, you told WalkBoston's Annual Meeting that you "want there to be a pedestrian army in this state", and that you are working to "force integrated thinking". You told the WalkBoston attendees to focus on effecting change in their own cities and towns, stating: "We need you to empower local communities to reach out to the state for assistance and support."

For the past three years the East Acton Village Planning Committee has been working to find a way to implement Smart Growth principles along a ¾ mile strip of Great Road (Route 2A) in Acton. We are both blessed and cursed in our location – blessed by the nearby presence of Ice House Pond, Nashoba Brook, and the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and cursed by Great Road, which slashes through our village district, cutting off safe pedestrian and bicycle traffic from one side of the village to the other.

East Acton Village needs the Commonwealth's assistance to create a walkable, bikable community. The current speed limit on Great Road in Acton is too fast for a safe crossing - too fast to even install crosswalks, and crosswalks are an essential component of the village plan. The East Acton Village revitalization project cannot begin proper implementation without safe pedestrian crossings on Great Road, and to even consider such a crossing the speed limit on Great Road must be reduced to no more than 35 m.p.h. To fully implement the Plan's recommendations, a traffic light needs to be installed at the intersection of Great Road and Concord Road, on-street parking should be permitted, a sidewalk network completed, and transitional neck-downs be installed at the entries to the Village District from both East and West.

The East Acton Village Planning document (attached) has been completed and adopted by the Acton Planning Board as an addendum to the Acton Master Plan. Many comments received in public input meetings to date have expressed concerns with dangers to the pedestrians and cyclists on Great Road. Please support our efforts in making the dream of East Acton Village become a reality.

We greatly appreciate your commitment to Smart Growth, and your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Walter Foster, Chairman
Board of Selectmen

Ken Sghia-Hughes, Chairman
East Acton Village Planning Committee